

*H. Priscus (H.) præs.*

A

FREE BRITON'S  
ADVICE  
TO THE  
FREE CITIZENS  
OF  
*DUBLIN.*

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*Procuratio Reipublicæ ad utilitatem eorum qui commissi  
Sunt, non ad eorum quibus commissæ est, gerenda est.*

CICERO. OFF. L. I.

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D U B L I N :

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in *Skinner-Row*, 1748.

(Price One Penny.)

FREE BRITONS

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## FREE CITIZENS

from internal Causes, viz. Plagues, Pestilence, or dreadful Invasions, and then the Authority of Laws; or the Conduct of some great Per-

## DUBLIN.

**I**T is the Opinion of the greatest Politicians, that those Governments are the best and most lasting, which, by the natural Effect of their Constitution, are often drawn back to their first Principles. The true End of all Society, is certainly the Happiness of the Associated; and it is hardly possible to conceive, that any Sett of Men would agree to form themselves into a particular Government, and confer such and such Powers on one or more Men, or Bodies of Men, without consulting the Happiness and Welfare of themselves, who are the Constituents and Givers of those Powers. The more strongly therefore the Good of the Whole is secur'd,

the more perfect is that Government, and the more terrible must all Changes and Innovations therein prove ; but, as in the Course of Things, these will befall, and Bodies Politick as well as Natural, have their sickly Periods, the surest Remedy is to reduce them to their original Frame: And this has often happen'd either from external Causes, viz. Plagues, Famine, or dreadful Invasions, and such like ; or from internal Causes, the Authority of severe Laws ; or the Conduct of some great Personage, whose Actions have at once been Laws and Examples. I chuse at present to prove the Truth of the last, by quoting many Cases, wherein the Virtues of a single Person have rous'd a sinking Nation from Despondency, to assert her former Freedom, or prop'd her Fame, when even the Spirit of Liberty was decay'd. If I have Recourse to antient History for the Facts, none will, I am perswaded, think them less true, because they were done long ago.

AT a Time when *Athens*, weakened by intestine Divisions, and War abroad, sunk under the superior Force of her Neighbours the *Spartans*, and by the Insolence of her Conquerors, from a free Commonwealth, became Subject not to one alone, but thirty Tyrants, a Man was found, *Thrasybulus*,

and



and he a Fugitive, of undaunted Resolution, superior to the Strokes of Fortune, who, with a few, unhappy, brave Fellow-Sufferers, dar'd to march into the Streets of *Athens*, rous'd the drooping Courage of the Citizens, disputed with the cruel Enslavers, and at last by Force expell'd them from that City, which, since the first Establishment of their Tyranny, had been a Scene of Confusion, and lawless Massacre. Thus *Athens* again saw herself her own Mistress, by the unshaken Virtue and Constancy of one Man. But the Spirit of Liberty was then not quite lost; it was smother'd, not extinguish'd.

BUT when this City had been ensnared by the golden Bait of *Philip*, and fell a Prey to *Alexander*; when his Successors had rent all *Greece*, and many in Turn had courted *Athens* and possess'd her by Force or Subtlety; when nothing was left but the Name of Liberty within her Walls, and that was mentioned with Fear and Trembling; yet even then the severe Virtue of *Phocion* supported her Dignity; no Threats could awe him, no Flattery sooth him into Meanness; and even that abject People had such a feeling Sense of his Merit, that, without his Sollicitation (for he scorn'd the base Arts of Time-servers and Partizans) even in his Absence, he was forty five Times chosen Commander of their Ar-

mies. Happy had it been for *Athens*, had a few such Heroes been contemporary with, or even Successors to, him ! But the Spirit of Liberty was then sunk; Faction had universally introduced private Regard, and private Regard was soon follow'd by absolute Slavery : He came to the Helm, as is observed, when the publick Bottom was just upon sinking, and had only the Shipwrecks of the Commonwealth to steer.

*THEBES*, another City of *Greece*, was ever look'd on with Contempt by her Neighbours, till the great and unparallel'd Genius of *Epaminondas* pointed out to her the Road to Glory, and taught her to command those whom before she had obey'd ; but his Life was short, tho' his Merit compleat, and his Fellow-Citizens had but Time to wonder at him, not to imitate him.

NUMBERLESS Examples might be brought, from the *Roman* History, of Men, who, by a steady Perseverance in the Right, renew'd, as it were, the Constitution : Their Virtues brought a Blush into the Checks of Vice and Corruption, and struck such Awe into Faction, that to live like them became the Mode and Custom of the Times, and good Customs had the Force of good Laws. One of



of this Stamp was *Fabrizius*, whose great soul  
 Shines so remarkably in a private Conference,  
 that I persuade myself the Publick will not  
 be disgusted with such a lively Picture of  
 the *Roman* Greatness; which Men have  
 learn'd indeed to talk of, but not to Practise.  
 When *Pyrrhus* had defeated the *Romans*,  
 Ambassadors were sent to him to treat about  
 the Release of their Prisoners; after his ge-  
 neral Answer to them, that King took *Fa-  
 bricius* aside, and, expressing a strong Desire  
 of his Friendship, and the great Sense he  
 entertain'd of his Virtues, in a truly kingly  
 Stile told him, " I am ready to give you as  
 " much Gold and Silver as will set you a-  
 " bove the most opulent Persons of *Rome*;  
 " do not believe that I do you a Favour in  
 " this: It is I who shall receive one if you  
 " accept my Offer. For I am persuaded  
 " that no Expence does a Prince more Ho-  
 " nour than to make the Fortunes of great  
 " Men, reduced by Poverty to a Condition  
 " unworthy of their Merit and Virtue, and  
 " that such an Use is the noblest a King  
 " can make of Riches. For the rest, I am  
 " far from expecting that you should do  
 " me any unjust or dishonourable Service  
 " by Way of Recompence. What I ask  
 " of you, can only do you Honour, and  
 " augment your Power in your Country.

“ I have occasion for a Man of Virtue and  
 “ a faithful Friend ; and you, on your Side,  
 “ have occasion for a Prince, who by his  
 “ Liberality may enable you to give a great-  
 “ er Scope to the Benevolence of your Dis-  
 “ positions.” ----- Such were the offers of  
 that great Prince ; but how memorable is  
 the Answer of the poor *Roman* ! --- “ If you  
 “ believe that Poverty renders my Condi-  
 “ tion inferior to that of any other *Roman*,  
 “ and that while I discharge the Duties of  
 “ an honest Man, I am the less consider’d,  
 “ because not of the Number of the Rich ;  
 “ permit me to tell you, that the Idea you  
 “ have of me is not just. Has my Coun-  
 “ try, on account of my Poverty, ever de-  
 “ bar’d me of those glorious Employments,  
 “ that are the Objects of the Emulation of  
 “ all great Minds ? I take Place with the  
 “ Richest and most Powerful ; and if I have  
 “ any Thing to complain of, it is of being  
 “ too much praised and honoured. To dis-  
 “ charge my Employments I expend nothing  
 “ of my own, no more than all the Rest  
 “ of the *Romans*. *Rome* does not ruin her  
 “ Citizens by raising them to the Magistra-  
 “ cy. She bestows upon those in Office all  
 “ the Helps they want, and supplies them  
 “ with Liberality and Magnificence. For  
 “ it is not with our City as with many o-  
 “ thers,



"others, where the Publick is very poor,  
 "while private Persons possess immense  
 "Riches. We are all rich when the Com-  
 "monwealth is so, because she is so for us.  
 "In equally admitting the rich and poor to  
 "publick Employments according as she  
 "thinks them worthy, she makes all her Citi-  
 "zens equal, and knows no other Difference  
 "between them, but Merit and Virtue. As  
 "to what Concerns my private Affairs, far  
 "from complaining of my Fate, I esteem  
 "myself the most Happy of Men, when I  
 "compare myself to the Rich, and feel a  
 "kind of Delight, and even Pride, rise up  
 "in me from this Condition. My little  
 "Field, barren as it is, supplies me with  
 "all that is necessary, provided I take care  
 "to cultivate it, and preserve its Fruits.  
 "Do I want any Thing more? All Nou-  
 "rishment is grateful to me, when season'd  
 "with Hunger. I drink with Luxury when  
 "I am dry. I taste all the Sweets of Re-  
 "pose when I am weary. I content my-  
 "self with an Habit that keeps out the  
 "Cold, and of all the Moveables that serve  
 "for the same Use, the meanest are those  
 "I like best. I should be unreasonable and  
 "unjust if I accused Fortune. She supplies  
 "me with all that Nature requires. As to  
 "Superfluity, she has not given it me;  
 "but

" but at the same Time I have learned not  
 " to desire it. Not having Abundance in-  
 " deed I am not in a Condition to relieve  
 " the Wants of others; the sole Advan-  
 " tage for which the Rich can be envied.  
 " But while I impart to the Commonwealth  
 " and my Friends the little I possess; while  
 " I render my Country all the Services of  
 " which I am capable, and in a Word do  
 " every Thing that depends on me, With  
 " what can I reproach myself? The Desire  
 " of enriching myself never enter'd into  
 " my Thoughts. Would it be now con-  
 " sistent for me to accept the Gold and Sil-  
 " ver which you offer me? What Idea would  
 " the World form of me? What Exam-  
 " ple should I set my Country? You there-  
 " fore shall keep your Riches, if you please,  
 " and I my Poverty and Reputation." -----

This was that *Fabrizius*, who, when *Pyrrhus*  
 his Physician came to his Tent and of-  
 fer'd to Poison his Prince, sent the Traytor  
 back in Chains to his Master.

ANOTHER of the same Mold, and be-  
 fore him in order of Time, was *Quintius*  
*Cincinnatus*, whom the Romans, in their  
 deepest Distresses, call'd from a little Cot-  
 tage to the first Dignity in their City: They  
 found him poorly cover'd, holding his own  
 Plough; he obeyed their Summons, but  
 could



could not forbear lamenting with Tears that his little Field that Year should be unfown; He reliev'd their Misfortunes, suppress'd the factious Chamours of the Tribunes, fought their Battles with Success, animated their Counsels, rous'd their Youth from Supineness and Luxury to the Study of Arts and Arms; and having often enjoy'd the highest Offices, acted to his Death one consistent Character. Glorious Times! when nothing could debar Men of publick Employments but Vice and Inability.

I might recount many great Names, the *Decii*, *Attilius Regulus*, the two *Catos* and others, but these Instances are enough to prove what I set out with; that the singular Virtues of one Man have often established anew a declining Government. I shall now particularly address you the Citizens of *Dublin*. You are about to chuse a Person to transact the Business of your City in particular, and your Country in general, together with the representative Body of the Kingdom. Grievances are complain'd of among you; these can only be redress'd by the Commons, the grand Censors of the Nation; to see that they are redress'd is the Business of your Representative. A Stranger in your City and your Island, I know not who are  
the

the aggrieved or the Aggressors among you, but without deference to the latter I will venture to affirm, what is an allowed Truth, as in the Grand, so in the Lesser subordinate Communities, the Safety of the whole depends on the proper balance of Power among the Parts; and this Balance consists in the mutual Independency of the Parts; by which Independency I mean an absolute uninfluenc'd Freedom in their Councils and Proceedings; nevertheless every Part is answerable to the rest for the Consequences of those Proceedings, so far as they affect the whole. If this be the Constitution of your City, as I believe it to be, then if any Part, or Parts united have attempted to destroy the Freedom and Independency of any other Power in your City, to rob it of its Privileges, and establish a greater Power on its Ruins; whatever be the Cause, whether private Interest, ill-grounded Ambition, or a seditious Spirit, the Part or Parts so Injurious, even tho' they have not executed their Design, have declar'd that they live by other Laws than the Legislature appointed, which in the original Constitution provided for the good of the whole; they have declared themselves a Faction, Enemies to your City in particular, and to the Nation in general; and no Man of that Body, no Aider or Abetter, no Man that even winks at such

Usur-



Usurpation, can represent the aggrieved in any other Light, than that of their Tyrant, and avowed Enemy.

If then you, who are injured, make the great Body of the City, for seldom have Encroachments begun on the popular Side, at this Time exert your Power; if the Spirit of Liberty hath slept a while, it is not dead, rouse it now with double Vigour. Shew that you will be free in this Instance, and you will lay the Corner-stone for restoring the Rights you have already lost. Chuse an able honest Steward from among yourselves, not a weak perfidious Master from among your Enslavers. Is there a Man among you, who would entrust the Management of his Estate to him who had remov'd his Neighbour's Landmark? And what must you entrust to the Man who shall represent you? Your Liberty, a Blessing dearer than Property or Life, without which these are not secure to you for one Day. If you ever wish'd to serve your Country and yourselves, now is the Time. You may, and ought, and will I hope prove yourselves worthy of that Liberty and those Rights, which the great Spirits of your Ancestors bravely struggled to defend against the open Attacks and secret Conspiracies of ambitious Princes; for which  
they

they thought their Deaths a cheap Purchase, and deem'd it a rich Legacy to their Children to leave them Heirs to such invaluable Blessings.

BUT before ye determine, be cautious; look round for a fit Subject; a weak Man cannot serve you, and a bad Man will not. If there be one of approv'd Abilities and Integrity, whom yet no Threats or Promises could divert from his Duty, that Man can represent you while you are free, he is most likely to preserve you so, and on him should the Election light.

ARM yourselves against the base Arts by which many will attempt to seduce you; for such Strides hath Villainy now made, that Men employ their Faculties, rather to find out Reasons why Things should be amiss, than how they should be amended. *Divide and Rule*, was the great Maxim of Enslavers in former Ages; *Corrupt and Rule*, trod on the Heels of it, and hath been almost ever successful. The Man, who by Bribery or Promises would purchase, by Threats extort your Voices, or by direct or indirect Means pervert your Judgments, that Man attempts to Rule and not to serve you: And be assured that he who would by  
any



any Means corrupt another is himself already corrupted. The Argument so common in the Mouths of many, that a rich Man is best fitted to represent you, because least liable to Corruption, deserves no farther Notice than to be despis'd. Yet, ridiculous as this and such like Arguments seem, they must secretly please every honest Man, who can consider them no otherwise than as the last Groans of expiring Faction. When you have found an able and a good Man, let this be your Maxim, *unite and be free*, be resolute in chusing him alone, so shall the meanest among you share in the Merit of his Actions, and your Posterity, when they record the Advantages they enjoy, will bless the Fathers who bequeath'd them. Extend your Views, dare to hope that your Spirit will animate the whole Nation, and that one Day this Island will be a Seat of Wealth and Power.

THE Gentlemen, who have tasted the Sweets of Polite Learning and the Advantages of a liberal Education, must confess that they are the Effects of Liberty, the rich Produce of a generous Soil, and Fruits that never could be grafted upon Slavery. Look into the annals of *Athens* and *Rome*, those Commonwealths so famous while Liberty was

was the great Cause for which they fought;  
 Arts and Sciences flourish'd, Philosophy and  
 polite Literature were the Amusements of  
 the Camp, and the Business of Retirement;  
 the Forum was the Field of Excellence,  
 and Eloquence the Child of Liberty: pre-  
 par'd the Way to all the Offices of State; but  
 when a free Spirit was stifled by Faction,  
 when Corruption like a Deluge flow'd in,  
 and Slavery usurp'd the Throne of Justice,  
 Arts like faithful Clients fell with their Pa-  
 tron. I cannot conclude; my fellow-Subjects  
 (for that is the only Name by which I am  
 authoriz'd to call you) without minding you,  
 that from this Election, you not only Date  
 your future Freedom or Slavery, but by it  
 openly confess and avow yourselves Free-men  
 or Slaves. Day this I shall see a great  
 Power.

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HELVIDIUS PRISCUS

DE 58